

**Opening Hymn: Come thou long expected Jesus**

Come, thou long-expected Jesus,  
born to set thy people free;  
from our fears and sins release us;  
let us find our rest in thee.

Israel's strength and consolation,  
hope of all the earth thou art;  
dear desire of every nation,  
joy of every longing heart.

Born thy people to deliver;  
born a child and yet a king;  
born to reign in us for ever;  
now thy gracious kingdom bring.

By thine own eternal Spirit,  
rule in all our hearts alone:  
by thy all-sufficient merit,  
raise us to thy glorious throne.

*Cross of Jesus 3ii NEH*

**The Advent Wreath: Advent 4 – The Blessed Virgin Mary**

People of God: prepare! God, above all, maker of all, is one with us in Christ.  
God, the mighty God, bends down in love to earth.  
God with us, God beside us, comes soon to the world he has made.

Let us pray:

God our Father,  
the angel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary that she was to be the mother of your Son.  
Though Mary was afraid, she responded to your call with joy.  
Help us, whom you call to serve you,  
to share like her in your great work of bringing to our world your love and healing.  
We ask this through him who is the light coming into the world,  
the same Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

**The Collect**

God our redeemer,  
who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary  
to be the mother of your Son:  
grant that, as she looked for his coming as our saviour,  
so we may be ready to greet him  
when he comes again as our judge;  
who is alive and reigns with you,  
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God, now and for ever.

**Amen.**

**The New Testament Reading**

A reading from St Paul's letter to the Romans.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy scriptures, the gospel concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith among all the Gentiles for the sake of his name, including yourselves who are called to belong to Jesus Christ, to all God's beloved in Rome, who are called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

*Romans 1: 1–7*

**Gospel Acclamation: Wait for the Lord**

Wait for the Lord, whose day is near.

Wait for the Lord: be strong, take heart!

*Taize Community*

**The Gospel**

Alleluia. Alleluia.

Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,  
and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

**Alleluia.**

*cf Isaiah 40: 3–5*

The Lord be with you.

**And also with you.**

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St Matthew.

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.' When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

*St Matthew 1: 18–end*

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**The Creed:**

Let us declare our faith in the living God.

**We believe in God the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named.**

**We believe in God the Son, who lives in our hearts through faith, and fills us with his love.**

**We believe in God the Holy Spirit, who strengthens us with power from on high.**

**We believe in one God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

**Offertory Hymn: O come, O come, Emmanuel**

O come, O come, Emmanuel!  
redeem thy captive Israel,  
that into exile drear is gone  
far from the face of God's dear Son.  
*Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, thou Wisdom from on high!  
who madest all in earth and sky,  
creating man from dust and clay:  
to us reveal salvation's way.  
*Rejoice!...*

O come, O come, Adonai,  
who in thy glorious majesty  
from Sinai's mountain, clothed with awe,  
gavest thy folk the ancient law.  
*Rejoice!...*

O come, thou Root of Jesse! draw  
the quarry from the lion's claw;  
from those dread caverns of the grave,  
from nether hell, thy people save.  
*Rejoice!...*

O come, thou Lord of David's Key!  
the royal door fling wide and free;  
safeguard for us the heavenward road,  
and bar the way to death's abode.  
*Rejoice!...*

O come, O come, thou Dayspring bright!  
pour on our souls thy healing light;  
dispel the long night's lingering gloom,  
and pierce the shadows of the tomb.  
*Rejoice!...*

O come, Desire of nations! show  
thy kingly reign on earth below;  
thou Corner-stone, uniting all,  
restore the ruin of our fall.  
*Rejoice!...*

*Veni Emmanuel 11 NEH*

**Communion Hymn: For Mary mother of our Lord**

For Mary, Mother of our Lord,  
God's holy name be praised,  
who first the Son of God adored,  
as on her child she gazed.

The angel Gabriel brought the word  
she should Christ's mother be;  
Our Lady, handmaid of the Lord,  
made answer willingly.

The heavenly call she thus obeyed,  
and so God's will was done;  
the second Eve love's answer made  
which our redemption won.

She gave her body for God's shrine,  
her heart to piercing pain;  
and knew the cost of love divine,  
when Jesus Christ was slain.

Dear Mary, from your lowliness  
and home in Galilee  
there comes a joy and holiness  
to every family.

Hail, Mary, you are full of grace,  
above all women blest;  
blest in your Son, whom your embrace  
in birth and death confessed.

*Kilmarnock 161 NEH*

**The Anthem: Gabriel's Message**

The angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
'All hail', said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,  
most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!

'For known a blessed Mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honour thee,  
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold.  
Most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
'To me be as it pleaseth God', she said,  
'My soul shall laud and magnify his Holy Name.'  
Most highly favoured lady. Gloria!

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ, was born  
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will ever say:  
'Most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!

*Arr. John Rutter (b. 1945)*

**Final Hymn: Lo! He comes with clouds descending**

Lo! he comes with clouds descending,  
once for favoured sinners slain;  
thousand thousand saints attending  
swell the triumph of his train:  
Alleluia!  
God appears, on earth to reign.

Every eye shall now behold him  
robed in dreadful majesty;  
those who set at nought and sold him,  
pierced and nailed him to the Tree,  
deeply wailing,  
shall the true Messiah see.

Those dear tokens of his passion  
still his dazzling body bears,  
cause of endless exultation  
to his ransomed worshippers:  
with what rapture  
gaze we on those glorious scars!

Yea, Amen! let all adore thee,  
high on thine eternal throne;  
Saviour, take the power and glory,  
claim the kingdom for thine own:  
O come quickly!  
Alleluia! Come, Lord, come!

*Helmsley 9 NEH*